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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001899

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [FR](#) [GT](#) [VE](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR ON VENEZUELA AND THE
UNSC

REF: A. STATE 37915

[1](#)B. PARIS 1605

Classified By: DCM Karl Hofmann for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador Stapleton met March 23 with President Chirac's diplomatic advisor, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne (MGM) March 23 to press for French support for Guatemala's candidacy for the Latin American UNSC seat opening in January 2007 (refs), emphasizing in particular the harm Venezuelan membership would do to the Council itself. (Septel reports on Gourdault-Montagne's comments on a range of Middle East issues.)

[1](#)2. (C) Gourdault-Montagne, noting that the UNGA would not be voting on the matter until September at the earliest, stated that the GOF had not yet taken a final decision. However, there was "99 percent" certainty that France will not support Venezuela. He recalled the "personal sympathy" between Presidents Chirac and Chavez, which was based on France's view that Chavez "was an expression of some trends in the region." Significantly, he referred to that relationship in the past tense, commenting that the "Bolivarian Revolution" has taken Venezuela in unwelcome directions, citing specifically its support for Iran at the IAEA. "The man is unpredictable," added MGM, and while the GOF does not view Venezuela as posing a real threat to the U.S., it is cognizant of its attacks on "allies of France." While France will obviously not vote for Venezuela, it will want to exert its influence at the right time. Given its relations with the region, it will want to be seen as having consulted governments, in particular Brazil and Chile, where Chirac will visit in late May, before publicly stating its position.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: While MGM effectively ruled out France supporting Venezuela, there was no commitment to campaign for Guatemala. We do not rule out the possibility of positive French engagement, which we will continue to press for, but the GOF position will be significantly influenced by the evolution of its disenchantment with Venezuela and its analysis of Latin American dynamics vis a vis Caracas.

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Stapleton